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# 'THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE HEATHEN'

A REPLY

TO

Mr. HENRY W. FROST

DIRECTOR OF THE

CHINA INLAND MISSION IN NORTH AMERICA

BY

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# "THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE HEATHEN"

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**B**EFORE distributing my booklets I am just in time to write an answer to Mr. Frost's Article "*The Spiritual Condition of the Heathen*" which was published in the May and June numbers of the American edition of *China's Millions*. The China Inland Mission is going to put it in pamphlet form, for wide circulation.

Mr. Frost brings forward ten theses, which he styles MISCONCEPTIONS, and makes comments on each. In my *Reply*, I have placed these before the reader in order from I to X, with remarks on each.

I always listen carefully to those who, like Mr. Frost, so honour God's Word; and I most heartily thank God for the noble witness to Scriptural truth which much of his article gives. But I regret that there is not a little which I have to controvert.

## I

*God cannot possibly allow such vast numbers to perish.*

On this Mr. Frost remarks, "It is never otherwise than presumptuous to say from any natural standpoint what God can, and can not do." This is true. We need to see all things from the Divine standpoint, as revealed in Scripture. Mr. Frost continues:—

"God has declared:—'My thoughts are not your thoughts . . .saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts higher than your thoughts.'"

Let not Mr. Frost, however, be too confident in making such a quotation here. Let him remember that it is *possible*—to my mind it is *certain*—that God has infinitely higher and nobler

thoughts concerning the race, than His permitting such a final triumph of judgment over mercy as will result in myriads of millions being sent to *endless* torments.

He next quotes the words of Christ:—"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereby; for narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it." Matt. 7: 13, 14. Here our Saviour is speaking exact truth concerning "the children of *this* age," a truth which our eyes attest. But before this Scripture can be cited as proving *endless conscious suffering*, it must first be proved that the word "destruction" means that; and it must also be proved that the "few" who "find life" will *endlessly* remain few; *but these two things cannot be proved.*

By the time which Rev. 7: 9 speaks of has arrived, the "few" will have become "a great multitude which no man could number;" and beyond this time lies the vast development of final *universal* salvation.

In the Revelation, Chapters 4 and 5, we have ascriptions of praise to God on the splendid themes of creation and redemption. Chapter 5 is occupied with the latter. As to the ascribers of praise and their numbers, we read of the "new song" being sung by the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders; the former representing the saints of the New Covenant the latter the saints of the Old.

This number of ascribers, which includes human beings of "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," is later increased by many angels—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"—but this does not nearly fulfil the grand vision of the seer.

In verse 13 he sees "*every* created thing" in *all* regions of creation ascribing "blessing, honour, glory, and dominion" unto the Father and to the Lamb. Cp. Phil. 2: 10, 11.

The vision<sup>1</sup> carries us on to the time of final *universal* reconciliation (Col. 1: 20), unless the lost, whom some hold will be *endlessly* wailing and “gnashing their teeth in impotent rage against God,” can also, *at one and the same time*, give to Him such a magnificent ascription of praise.

This surpassing vision refers to the same glorious truth as another of John’s prophecies, which is recorded in Chapter 22: 3. The Greek reads: “There shall be no more *anything* accursed,” (see R. V. marg.).

It is a safe maxim to make no sacred writer contradict himself; and inasmuch as John speaks of the curse of God resting on many for the great age which is called “the age of ages;”<sup>2</sup> it is plain that the above prophecy must speak of time which reaches *beyond* that period.

I turn to Matt. 25: 41, and read the awful words, “Depart from Me, ye *cursed*, into the *eternal* fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.”

I turn to Rev. 22: 3 and read the blessed words, “There shall be no more *anything* accursed,” and conclude that just as mercy will finally “boast against” or “exult over” judgment,<sup>3</sup> so, finally, God’s blessing will outmeasure His cursing, and the latter be swallowed up, and lost in the former.

That which is subsequent to the paragraph which contains the above prophecy (Rev. 22: 1-5) is merely supplementary exhortation of an ordinary evangelical type, and does not add any matter which is subsequent to it in chronological order.

(1) John, in his vision, did not see as far into the future as Paul. John only saw as far as the final reconciliation. Paul saw, beyond this, the Son’s giving up of the Kingdom, His being subject to the Father, and the Father becoming finally, “all in all.”

(2) As to “the age of ages,” and “the ages of the ages” being interchangeable expressions, see *Plea and Protest*, pp 38, 39.

In like manner the expression “heaven of heavens” (Deut. 10:14) is, in its Hebrew form, “heavens of heavens”—both plural.

(3) James 2: 13, so Greek.

Mr. Frost asserts that "eternal" in Matt. 25: 46 means "unending." I reply. There is no such dangerous truth as a half truth. Mr. Frost, in not adding *any qualifying words* to "unending," slips, unconsciously, into error; and this is very serious in such a teacher. He ignores the *spiritual* meaning of the word, which is of the highest importance. When it comes to *duration*, if he had said "*belonging to the future age*," or even "*unending in respect to the period referred to*," he would have been nearer to a "true theology" which he imagines to be his possession. This last qualifying clause raises the whole question of the "period."

In the case of some, "eternal punishment" will be *qualified* by Scripture as to its lasting throughout the *whole* future age by our Lord's words "many stripes" and "few stripes." It will be *permitted* as to others who will suffer throughout that whole period. It will be *prohibited* to all and each, if that supposed "period" be held to mean "infinity."

"Eternal life," on the other hand, as to duration, *strictly means*, in such a connection, the life which will extend throughout the *whole* future age; but other Scriptures permit this life to merge into that life "*beyond the ages*" which is without end.

Before Mr. Frost can establish the doctrine of the strict endlessness of pain, he must first establish, from Scripture, the strict endlessness of evil—but this latter doctrine is one which Scriptures like "God *all in all*," and "there shall be no more *anything* accursed," etc., run *wholly* and *directly* counter to.

But further, in our Lord's words about the broad and narrow way, as quoted in the passage above from Matthew, "destruction" stands in antithesis to eternal "life;" therefore, to sustain Mr. Frost's position every word which is, Scripturally, antithetical to eternal life, should also be hall-marked with the idea of *endlessness*; but this is certainly not so.

For instance, in Gal. 6: 8, we get "*corruption*" as the antithesis to "eternal life;" but in Rom. 8: 21 we get the

glorious words, “the creation itself also shall be *delivered from* the bondage of *corruption*.” From which it can be seen that corruption will not be strictly permanent in God’s universe.

Again, in Rom. 6: 23 we get “*death*” as the antithesis to “eternal life;” but in Cor. 15: 26, we are told “the LAST enemy that shall be *abolished* is death;” and this “death” is the very “death” to which Rom. 6: 23 refers. Hence that which is in antithesis to eternal life is not *endless*. If this be true of “corruption” and “death,” it is also true of “perishing” and “destruction,” though this is by analogy.

In Deut. 4: 26, Moses threatens the Israelites that if they forsake Jehovah for false gods, they “shall soon utterly *perish* from off the land, and shall be utterly *destroyed*,” yet four verses down he utters this magnificent promise of final restoration. “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things *are come upon thee*, in the latter days thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and hearken unto His voice, for He is a *merciful* God; He will not fail thee, neither *destroy* thee;” from which last clause we can see that the expressions used above “utterly perish” and “be utterly destroyed,” do not mean *endless* destruction, for they are consistent with an ultimate restoration. It is a poor argument to say that the same generations are not in view here; for the whole passage is imbued with the thought of *solidarity*, a solidarity which St. Paul’s noble words “unto which promise *our twelve tribes* earnestly serving God”<sup>1</sup> bear eloquent witness to.

Mr. Frost continues:—

“Moreover, it is to be recognized in this matter that it is not a question of numbers. . . If it is true that it will be just, for any reason, for God to allow *one* heathen to perish; it follows that it will be equally just, for the same reason, for Him to allow *any number* of heathen to perish.”

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(1) Acts. 26: 6.

I care not to raise the question of God's justice, but only to test any statement by scripture; and as Mr. Frost maintains that to "perish" is to endure *endless conscious suffering*, then I strenuously assert that the idea that God will permit *any one single creature* of His, be that one Satan, demon, or man, to suffer such a punishment, is an idea which is *utterly unscriptural*.

Such a dogma as *endless* conscious suffering involves such unthinkable "frightfulness," that it should be sustained by absolutely unassailable and incontrovertible scriptural proof, but I defy Mr. Frost to bring forward a *single* scripture to prove it.

It is common to adduce as proof that sin, which is often called "the unpardonable sin," of "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." The description of this sin occurs in Matt. 12: 31, 32, and Mk. 3: 28-30.

*I am prepared to show not only that these scriptures do not support Mr. Frost's doctrine; but also to show that they are the very scriptures that overthrow it.*

As to the two accounts of what our Lord said, the verbal differences are manifest, which no doubt could be adjusted, if we had our Lord's words in their entirety.

With reference to forgiveness, Matthew uses the words "shall *not* be forgiven," and Mark "hath *never* forgiveness." The question remains are the "not" or "never" *absolute*, or is there any *explanation* of them, or other scriptures which *qualify* them?

Our Lord's own explanation of the "not" and the "never" is "neither in this age, nor in the future age" (Gk.). But it is scriptural to speak of the reign of Jehovah as being "for the (present) age, and the (future) age, *and yet longer*" (Ex. 15: 18) (LXX): therefore the future age is not *endless*.

Then as to Scriptural qualifications. No one can "bow the knee *in* the Name of Jesus," which involves *union* with the



Saviour, and be *unforgiven*. No one can have God *in* them as their “all,” and be *unpardoned*.

Hence if I say blasphemers against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this, or in the future age, I am precisely scriptural; but if I extend this into *endless* conscious suffering, I go *beyond* Scripture, and become unscriptural and disloyal to the teaching of Christ.

But further, our Lord, here, makes the sweeping statements that “*every* sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,” (Matt.) and “*all* their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men” (Mk.). Now, manifestly, many sins of mankind are not forgiven in this life. It, therefore, follows that there will be, according to Christ, a vast amount of forgiveness in the future age—not to speak of entire forgiveness in the consummation, but this is right against Mr. Frost’s doctrine, and effectually overthrows it.

As to our Saviour’s solemn word, which Mark records:—that the blasphemer in question is guilty of—or subject to (the penalty of) an eternal sin, I take this to mean that a man who has become so diabolically wicked that he will deliberately assert that the works of Christ are done by Satan, or that the Spirit of the perfectly holy Christ is “unclean,” is possessed of such an anti-God spirit, such a rebellious will that it requires the most lasting penalty that God will inflict, a penalty which will not cease throughout those ages, which make up the great future age, and which is, therefore, in a very high sense “eternal.”<sup>1</sup> But (N.B.) “eternal” is not “infinite;” nor can it here *take on* that meaning.

Satan, all demons, and a vast number of the human race are, and will be possessed of hearts equally liable to such a durable punishment; but two things seem to me to be clear from Scripture:—

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(1) See the different meanings of this word in *A Plea and Protest*, p 33.

(1) That this punishment will suddenly cease, when “the last enemy”—“the second death, which is the lake of fire”—will be “abolished.”

(2) That all the above beings will then be immediately reconciled to God, in sovereign mercy, “through the blood of the cross.”<sup>1</sup>

As to explanation of these mysteries I can give none, I receive them by faith.

My own mind, however, has been helped by the case of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>2</sup>

His awful pride had to be broken, and God’s judgment was the instrument used to bring this about.

“He was driven from men till his hair was grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws, until *seven times* passed over him”—that is a perfect and full justice, without mercy.

We might have gone to him, from time to time, and seen his hair and claws growing longer, and then have raised the question, “Can this punishment be for his *final* good? He seems only to be getting worse and worse!”

But further on we read of the *consummation*:—“At the *end* of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him . . . for all His works are truth, and His ways judgment, and *those that walk in pride He is able to abase.*”

I see here an analogy of what will take place finally—at the *end* of all the ages—in the case of *all* the lost, those impenitent or, which is the same thing, proud ones. It will even be true of the author of pride—Satan.

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(1) Col. 1: 20.

(2) Dan. 4: 32-37.

Of what use, and to what good for God to go on punishing the proud *after* they have been abased, acknowledged their sins, and become effectually and truly humble? To such, Scripture assures us God “giveth grace.”<sup>1</sup> He resists the proud, only so long as they continue proud, or are under punishment for their pride.

## II

*God is love, and He will provide a way of escape for the heathen.*

Mr. Frost's comments on this, which he holds to be a second “misconception,” begin thus:—

“A good many false conclusions may be founded on the phrase ‘God is love.’”

I reply. This is quite true, and it holds good in one or two false conclusions which Mr. Frost mentions.

But when it comes to this “false conclusion”—“God is love, and He will not allow His creatures to suffer,” it is only “false,” if the word “*endlessly*” is added.

Here is another of Mr. Frost's “false conclusions”—“‘God is love and in the other world, at least, it will be all light and no darkness, all heaven and no hell;’ and yet it is the Master who said, ‘In hell he lift up his eyes being in torments.’”

Change the “*at least*” into “*at last*” and we shall have a true conclusion. The Master's words are misquoted, and should read “In *Hades* he lifted up his eyes,” etc. As to the ignorance which confounds Hades with Gehenna, and makes the allegory of Dives and Lazarus support endless torment, please see *Eschatology in C.I.M.*, pp. 81-84, and Supplement to this *Reply*.

I must also add an emphatic protest against the magnificent Scripture, “God is Light” being used to sustain the doctrine of the *endless conscious suffering* of over a hundred thousand million of God's creatures.

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(1) Jam. 4: 6.

Mr. Frost tells us “ we are ever to keep in mind what ‘ Light ’ may allow and demand; for with God light means righteousness, not sentiment.”

I maintain that with God, His righteousness is not in opposition to His love, but flows from it, and is an expression of it.

In John’s Epistle “ Light ” is made to be synonymous with “ Love.” “ He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.”<sup>1</sup>

Even in poor fallen man we get such a noble thought about righteousness as the following:—“ Saul said to David, Thou art more righteous than I am, for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil.”<sup>2</sup>

For God to overcome evil with good is the highest expression of His righteousness, and right-doing, and although that goodness is consistent with the infliction of tremendous punishment yet it *never* does so without seeking the final good of the one punished.

I will anticipate the argument of “ the death penalty ” in this life being an exception to this, by saying that death *itself* is painless, though what leads to it may be painful: hence it is mad logic to adduce that which is painless as being, in any sense, analogous to *endless conscious suffering*.

Mr. Frost asserts: “ As for a loving provision for the heathen, God has made this through His Son; ” for “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, ” etc.

This “ loving provision, ” however, in the case of those heathen who have died without hearing the gospel,<sup>3</sup> is made to

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(1) 1 John 2: 9, 10.

(2) 1 Sam. 24: 17.

(3) Mr. Frost asserts that thirty-five million of these die yearly, that is, well over a thousand million in thirty years, for population is always increasing.

equal rather less than nothing, indeed it becomes practical mockery, owing to Mr. Frost's "true theology."

By this last, he is forced to assert that although God has made this "loving provision" for the heathen, yet myriads of millions will never *hear* of it, either in this age, the future age, or the consummation. May I, therefore, ask Mr. Frost these two questions?

(1) If this be so, *what good* was God's "loving provision" for them?

(2) If you were starving on an island, and somebody professed to make "loving provision" for your bodily needs, but took good care that you never *had* the provision, never *saw* it, or even *heard* of it, what was the provision worth, and wherein lay its loving kindness?

### III

*The heathen are living up to the light which they have ; therefore they will be saved.*

If people are to be found who think thus, then it is a misconception, as Mr. Frost's comments well show.

### IV

*Men in Christian lands are lost because they have heard the Gospel and have rejected it ; the heathen have not heard the Gospel and have not rejected it, therefore, they are not lost.*

This is indeed a most important misconception; and it is dealt with admirably by Mr. Frost in his comments.

He says "the premise" of this misconception "is untrue." "Men in Christian lands are not lost because they have heard the Gospel and rejected it. They are the more responsible to God on this account; *but they were lost before they heard the Gospel.* The reason that men are lost is because they are the inheritors of Adam's sin, and because, as sinners, they have

added sin to sin. And this is true, not only of men in Christian lands, but also of all men everywhere."

Thoroughly Scriptural is all this. I commend it to Sir Robert Anderson who makes "eternal punishment" to be solely the portion of those who have rejected Christ.

Mr. Frost is a brave man, he seeks no palliatives for his doctrine; and I admire him for it, though I so disagree with him on the point at issue.

## V

*We need not trouble ourselves about the heathen, but can leave them in the hands of God; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

A true misconception, well dealt with; but on the last clause I remark. Mr. Frost says, "God's 'doing right,' as related to the wicked, means a more terrible thing than many persons imagine."

Mr. Frost says this in connection with the overthrow of Sodom.

True, God's "doing right" may be "a more terrible thing" than many imagine, but not *such* a terrible thing as leaving them in *endless* torment. As to Sodom, see *Eschatology in the C.I.M.* p. 77.

## VI

*At any rate, the heathen will not be punished as those will be who have rejected Christ.*

Here I am in agreement with Mr. Frost, except that he would make "few stripes" to be an *endless* series of stripes, and I would call attention again to his ignoring the final abolition of "death" in his last quotation.

If Mr. Frost could only see that the "death" which 1 Cor. 15: 26 speaks of, as being abolished as the *last* enemy, is the *very death* which he treats of in his two last Scripture quotations:—(1) Rev. 21: 8, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; *which is the second death*;" and (2) Rom. 6: 21

“the *end* of those things is *death*”—what a gain would accrue to truth!

This is simply because he cannot see that in Scripture a *proximate* “end” can be in order to a *final* “end.” No endless tormentist can see this; if they could, they would cease to be endless tormentists.

Years ago, Mr. Hoste wrote me “To say that the Lord’s promise ‘Because I live ye shall live also’ gives security to the believer, is inconsistent with the contention that language describing the end of the wicked, only means their proximate end. *If the one is only proximate, then, so is the other.*”

The “end” of the believer is described in Rom. 6: 22 as being “eternal life;” and Mr. Hoste holds that if eternal life be held to be a proximate end, it would place the *endless* felicity or the “security” of the believer in jeopardy. But how so?

Eternal life is *the* “life of the ages” both present and future. Scripture uses language which makes the ages terminable. Hence if I say “the life of the ages” is a proximate end to the ultimate end of life *beyond* the ages, and sustain it by the revealed facts of:—(1) death abolished and (2) The Father Himself—the Fountain and Origin of all “life” in both Deity and creature—having become the “all” of such believers, do I jeopardize their “security” or endless felicity?

Does Mr. Hoste think that he can overthrow ultimate reconciliation, and establish endless torment by such reasoning?

Mr. Hoste could not possibly deny that the placing of *enemies under the feet* of Christ, spoken of in 1 Cor. 15: 25, predicates future punishment, that it is an “end” of the wicked, and that it corresponds to their end described in such varied language as “death,”<sup>1</sup> “perdition” or “destruction,”<sup>2</sup> and being “burned.”<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Rom. 6: 23.

(2) Phil. 3: 19.

(3) Heb. 6: 8.

But it is manifest that the abolition of the *last* enemy takes place *subsequent* to this; and this enemy being abolished, we get a subjection which is (N.B.) “UNTO HIM”—the Son.

This precise expression “UNTO HIM”<sup>1</sup> is used in the same verse of the Son’s subjection to the Father. Again I say (N.B.) it is now “*unto Him*” not “*under His feet*,” and the ultimate end is the Father becoming “all” in *all* these subjected ones.

As to these most important words “unto Him” we do well to compare our Lord’s glorious words, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men *unto Myself*.”<sup>2</sup>

It is painful to note the comments of endless tormentists on this Scripture.

Bishop Moule sees in it, literally, “all men;” but of these some are drawn to His throne (in endless glory) and the rest are drawn under His feet (in endless misery).

Here Dr. Moule overlooks the abolition of “death,” which is followed by subjection “unto Him” Finney explains it away thus:—

“The language is indeed universal in form, but cannot be construed as strictly universal without being brought into conflict with Bible truth and known facts.”<sup>3</sup>

I admit, of course, that Scripture affords examples of using the words “all men,” in a way which cannot be pressed. But in such an *intensely solemn* connection as the one above is, here, if anywhere, one would expect that He, who is the truth, would use language of *precision*, and say *exactly* what He meant.

Such a Scripture affords a good example of the absurdity of Christians denying the right of private interpretation to their fellow believers.

(1) The trifling difference in English R. V. “unto Him” and “to Him” is not in the Greek, which is identical—the Dative in both cases.

(2) John 7: 32. Some Greek Mss. read “all things.”

(3) *Sermons on Gospel Themes*, p. 65.



It would not be unfair to put the following language into Finney's mouth:—

If you hold that “*all* men,” here, means “*some* men ” then, well and good; but if you believe “*all* men ” means “*all* men,” then you are a Universalist, and therefore “*given up of God,*” and on your road to an endless hell!

Nor with Mr. Frost's articles before us, would it be unfair to put this language in his mouth:—

If you take these Scriptures to mean just what they say, and are a member of the C.I.M., then I will not only expel you, but seek to have you excluded from all corporate service, in asserting that to welcome you in Christ's service is both “*dangerous* ” and “*unwarrantable.*”

Please note carefully as to 1 Cor. 15: 25-28

(1) Enemies under the Son's feet.

This is *forced* subjection, i.e. “*eternal* ” or future punishment.

(2) The last enemy—“*death* ”—abolished.

This tells of the end of future punishment.

(3) All subject unto the Son.

This is *voluntary* subjection, or final reconciliation, in the case of former enemies.

(4) The Father “*all in all.*”

This predicates the perfect, universal, and endless good of all intelligent beings.

Now there are only two ways of avoiding this conclusion:—

(1) Explain the last statement away, by saying that it only mean's “*God's sovereignty,*” or “*acknowledged supremacy* ” over all; or,

(2) *Alter Scripture*, as the translators of the Chinese Mandarin version have done.

## VII

*We believe that the heathen are lost and that they will be judged : but we can well imagine that God will give those who have not heard the Gospel in this world a chance to hear it in the other world, and that thus they will have the opportunity of being saved.*

On this Mr. Frost remarks as follows:—

“ It is always dangerous, so far as truth is concerned, to give freedom to the imagination. To grant men the right to imagine, would be to create as many theories of divine procedure as there are men. Moreover such liberty would cast us back on human reasoning as the basis of truth, which would create spiritual instability of the gravest kind. If there was no revelation, this would be the best, in spite of peril, which men could do. But since there is a revelation, the surest and safest thing for any one to do is to depend wholly upon it. And when we search the Word of God for some intimation to the effect that the heathen will have another chance in the world beyond, we search in vain. As to such a supposition, there is complete silence. Also, on the contrary, there is positive testimony that the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation which men may have. *For instance.* Christ urged His apostles and disciples to preach the Gospel in this life, with fervent haste, throughout the world, and to every creature; which *evidently* would not have been the case if He could as well have left the work to another time and state and to other preachers, such as the angels or Himself. *Again,* the Apostles and Paul gave themselves, in the face of constant opposition and through the process of great suffering, to the task of evangelizing the whole world of their day; which *manifestly* would not have been the case unless they had been constrained by the conception of a present and pressing peril. *And again,* Paul witnessing to the Corinthians declares: ‘Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation;’ which words, be it observed, were written

to those who had been heathen and who were under the temptation of going back into heathen practices, and which thus indicate that what was true of them was also true of the heathen at large. Unless, therefore, we are to admit that the Word teaches annihilation or universalism—which doctrines a true theology has wholly and forever discredited—we are forced to the conclusion that the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls and of man's opportunity of benefiting by that saving grace." [My italics, S.P.S.]

The reader will observe that Mr. Frost maintains "when we search the Word of God for some intimation to the effect that the heathen will have another chance in the world beyond, we search in vain. As to such a supposition there is complete silence."

By this "complete silence" I am reminded of the endless tormentist Sir Robert Anderson's words, "As regards the destiny of those the Bible fails to reach it is absolutely silent,"<sup>1</sup> a statement which, in the interests of truth, I am glad to see Mr. Frost's pamphlet effectually annihilates. But I stoutly maintain that Mr. Frost's statement about "complete silence" is equally unscriptural and untrue.

I respectfully ask Mr. Frost how "*all nations*" and "*all families*"<sup>2</sup> are not only to "have a chance" of being blessed, but will actually "*be blessed*" in Christ, if *all* the lost heathen are to suffer *endless* conscious suffering? Yet this broad statement of blessing occurs seven times in Scripture, and is described as being "the gospel."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Frost continues:—

"On the contrary, there is positive testimony that the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation which men may have."

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(1) *Human Destiny*, p. 149. See also *Eschatology in C.I.M.*, pp. 20, 96.

(2) Acts 3: 25.

(3) Gal. 3: 8. See also p. 36 *Eschatology*.

I respectfully but firmly defy Mr. Frost to produce a single Scripture which will sustain this statement.

Mr. Frost gives three instances; by these I suppose he means to prove the above dogma.

He says:—

“ For instance, Christ urged His apostles and disciples to preach the gospel in this life with fervent haste, throughout the world, and to every creature; which evidently would not have been the case, if He could as well have left the work to another time and state, and to other preachers, such as the angels or Himself.”

To imagine that Christ would not urge His disciples to bring about vast *present* good, because that good, if now neglected, might be brought about in the far future, is a thought which seems to me to attribute callous indifference to our Blessed Lord.

Perish the thought!

To seek to secure, for the “lost ” in *this* age, the unspeakable gains of forgiveness of a guilty past, acceptance with God, followed by a life of holy devotion to Him and His cause, is quite sufficient to demand our most strenuous and life-long efforts. In addition to this, however, there is their salvation from future punishment; this, of course, gives an added motive. There is no ground for working ourselves up into a frenzy by imagining that any single one of God’s creatures is going to *endless* conscious suffering, for which doctrine Mr. Frost stands so resolutely, nor is there reason for going mad over the thought that all the departed heathen, or any of our departed loved ones have gone to such a doom.

To permit evil for a higher good is conceivable of God, and provable from Scripture ; <sup>1</sup> but to permit evil in order to add to

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(1) Rom. 5: 15-21; 8: 20, 21.

it *endless* evil is, to me, inconceivable of the ONE "save whom none is good—God,"<sup>1</sup> who "is kind toward the unthankful and evil,"<sup>2</sup> who "delighteth in mercy,"<sup>3</sup> who affirms that "mercy glorieth (or "exults") over judgment,"<sup>4</sup> and who "shuts up the all"<sup>5</sup> unto disobedience that He might have mercy on all without exception."

I ask the reader kindly to refer to pp. 50 fol. of "*A Plea and a Protest*," if he would care to see that those mediatorial offices of the Lord, which are directly connected with man's salvation, are in being throughout the mediatorial reign of Christ with His saints, in the age of the ages up to the consummation. These offices are *in being*, in order to be *in exercise*, with the saints as the ready channels of His saving ministry.

Let us proceed to Mr. Frost's second point.

He says:—

"Again, the Apostles and Paul gave themselves in the face of constant opposition and through the process of great suffering, to the task of evangelizing the whole world of their day; which manifestly would not have been the case unless they had been constrained by the conception of a present and pressing peril."

I have the privilege of being a missionary, and devoting myself to the task of world-evangelization. My parish consists of five thousand square miles, made up of five counties, in each county-town of which we have resident native workers.

As the sole European male worker I find my hands full. Oh! to bring the full gospel of pardon, holiness and health through faith in Christ's atonement and the power of His Spirit to every man, woman, and child!

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(1) Mk. 10: 18. (2) Lu. 6: 35. (3) Mic. 7: 18. (4) Jam. 2: 13.

(5) Rom. 11: 32. The force of the Greek *tous pantas*, which occurs twice in this verse, ("the all") is brought out by the words "all without exception," see Bengel *Gnomon*.

Yet, if I ask myself what is the “conception” which constrains me to work and pray for this prefecture, it is NOT the thought that any one of them is going to an *endless* hell. *Quite the contrary*; I believe in this world, or the next, or in the consummation, *every one* of them will be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. I believe this as firmly as I believe that God is “a faithful Creator,” and that His word is true.

What keeps me at my work is:—

- (1) The love of Christ to me, and mine to Him.
- (2) The command of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature.
- (3) The sense of the awfulness of the *present* sin, sickness, and misery, and the sense of duty to do all I can in the Name of Jesus and in the power of His Spirit to save them *now*.
- (4) And lastly, the knowledge that what men sow they must reap; and that, if they die impenitent, an awful—because perfectly just, but in no case endless—punishment awaits them in the future state.

Now these four heads are quite sufficient to keep me pegging away till Jesus comes. The dogma of *endless* torment is quite needless as an incentive. Indeed one of the keenest men I ever knew in China on endless torment, was a man who hardly ever moved out of his study to save souls.

Mr. Frost’s third point is as follows:—

“And again Paul witnessing to the Corinthians declares: ‘Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation:’ which words, be it observed, were written to those who were heathen ..... and which indicate that what was true of them was also true of the heathen at large.”

This is the *only one* of the three points where Scripture is adduced as direct proof. Mr. Frost would, no doubt, make a

great point of the use of the definite article here "*the* accepted time"—"*the* day of salvation." That he so believes is proved by his own language; "the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation which men have," and again "the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls." The definite article, however, is not in the Greek. The text should simply read:—"Now is an acceptable time; behold, now is a day of salvation." That "day" is as present now as then, and will continue throughout the "day of eternity,"<sup>1</sup> until universal reconciliation is accomplished.

Concerning Mr. Frost's three points, the first is to him "evident," the second "manifest," and the third unanswerable and dogmatic Scripture. To my mind each point seems weaker than the former.

Mr. Frost's last point is a summary judgment pronounced in favour of his *own* "theology."

He says:—

"Unless, therefore, we are to admit that the Word teaches annihilation or universalism—which doctrines a true theology has wholly and forever discredited—we are forced to the conclusion that the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls."

That is, "a *true* theology" believes in the *endless* torment of over a hundred thousand million human beings! Reader, kindly pause and THINK!

I understand that, in America, there are those who call themselves "universalists," who deny hell and future punishment. If this be true, I should have as little sympathy with their views, as with the views of endless tormentists.

Mr. Frost maintains that "a true theology has wholly and forever discredited" final reconciliation.

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(1) 2 Peter 3: 18, Greek, is an ascription of praise to the *Saviour*.

As I am speaking on behalf of many, and as the doctrine of final reconciliation is, to us, entirely Scriptural, and more precious than life, Mr. Frost can hardly expect us to take his castigation lying down.

When I say that Mr. Frost holds that God will inflict *endless* torment on over a hundred thousand million of "His offspring," I am not, as to numbers, unfair to him.

In the conclusion of his article he says:—"It is admitted that one thousand million of the present population of the earth are heathen." Further, in his "Editorial Notes" he quotes an author to the effect that "half the earth's inhabitants die before 16," and reminds us that "these millions and billions<sup>1</sup> are immortal souls."

Now I have a personal proposition to make to Mr. Frost as follows:—

In my booklet "*A Plea and Protest*" sent herewith, I give a "resultant summary" of correspondence on "that God may be all in all," pp. 12, 13; and "an exposition of 1 Cor. 15: 24-28," pp. 45-57.

I have read what you have to say on "The Spiritual Condition of the Heathen," will you give me a hearing?

If you will, I propose you should take as your thesis, "That God may be *all in all*," and reconcile that prophecy with *over a hundred thousand million* beings enduring endless conscious suffering, in endless heart-hatred against God, and consequently God being NOTHING *in any one* of them! If you do this, I hope it will possibly help you to look a little more sympathetically on the views of some of your brethren in Christ, whom Christ does not love or honour less than He does you.

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(1) "Billion" in America equals a thousand million: in England a million million.



## VIII

*But, granting that this world does present the place and time wherein men may be saved, is it not true that the great heathen religions afford opportunity of salvation for those who honestly and fully follow their teachings?*

Disallowing the statement that this world presents the *only* place and the *only* time when men may be saved, as I have shown from Scripture in dealing with Misconception VII, I find myself in complete accord with the way in which Mr. Frost deals with the question proposed here. All other religions, save the Christian religion, lack the *essentials* of salvation.

## IX

*But is it not true that there have been men in the past who have raised themselves above their heathen surroundings, have come to believe in one God, and have thus found salvation?*

Here again I am in complete agreement with Mr. Frost. That there have been a few such Mr. Frost admits: but such intellectual assent is very far removed from that "birth from above," without which none can ever "enter," or "see the kingdom of God."

## X

*Is it not true, however, that God is able, in the case of an honest heathen who has not heard the gospel, to reveal Christ to him by dream, vision, or revelation; and may not such a person come to know and believe in Christ, and so be saved?*

Mr. Frost deals with this question in a thoroughly sound, Scriptural way.

After these ten misconceptions, Mr. Frost adds this corollary, or inference:—

*But all this, if it is true, constitutes a great mystery, and is hard to be understood.*

Here Mr. Frost mentions several holy mysteries of our faith, and asserts that true wisdom consists in simply believing them, rather than attempting to explain them; and granting that any mystery is *truly* Scriptural, I fully agree with him; but the idea that the FAITHFUL CREATOR will permit *any one* of His creatures to endure *endless conscious suffering* is one that may be summarily dismissed from the mind with an *absolute certainty*, founded on God's Word, that no *such* "mystery" should be believed in.

From this we come to Mr. Frost's "Conclusion," which contains some true and important thoughts; but which is vitiated with the old fallacy of the chance of salvation being *strictly limited* to this brief span of existence in the case of those who have *heard* the gospel; and far worse than this, the God and Author of salvation is dishonoured by the disgraceful thought that "fully *thirty-five million* of those who have *never heard* of Christ pass out *yearly* into eternity" with not the *remotest chance* of ever being saved by that salvation (oh, the bitter irony of it!) which was "*provided for*" them.

Mr. Frost impresses on us lastly the two very valuable and necessary obligations which should rest upon us Christians:— (1) Compassion, (2) Immediacy, i.e. the state of being ready for immediate action, and taking that action.

But we can have these two virtues to the full, and yet utterly deny *endless* torment; to the loving, obedient heart, the sin and misery all around us, present and future, added to the Master's *command* to "preach the gospel to every creature" are *amply sufficient*.

Mr. Frost ends up with Paul's inspired words, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." May we indeed lay this utterance to heart, and be permeated by its spirit!

## SUPPLEMENT

Incalculable harm has been done to the doctrine of the ends of things by a misunderstanding of the allegory of Dives and Lazarus.

I have touched on this allegory somewhat fully in *Eschatology in the C.I.M.*, pp. 79-84; but here I will add some remarks.

Sheol and Hades are absolutely identical, the impenitent dead all go there, maintaining an existence which is not worthy to be called life, but which is *totally free from pain*. Sheol is *not* the place of torment. It is *invariably* translated Hades in the Greek O.T. Below I give a complete list of the 61 places where it occurs there.

Gen. 37: 35; 42: 38; 44: 29, 31. Numb. 16: 30, 33. Deut. 32: 22. 1 Sam. 2: 6. 1 Ki. 2: 6, 9. Job. 7: 9; 11: 8; 14: 13; 17: 13, 16; 21: 13; 26: 6. Ps. 6: 5; 9: 17; 16: 10; 18: 5; 30: 3; 31: 17; 49: 14 (twice), 15; 55: 15; 86: 13; 88: 3; 89: 48; 116: 3; 139: 8; 141: 7. Prov. 1: 12; 5: 5; 7: 27; 9: 18; 15: 11, 24; 27: 20; 30: 16. Eccl. 9: 10. Cant. 8: 6. Isa. 5: 14; 14: 9, 11, 15; 28: 15, 18; 38: 10, 18; 57: 9. Ezek. 31: 15, 16, 17; 32: 27. Hos. 13: 14 (twice). Am. 9: 2. Jon. 2: 2. Habuk. 2: 5.

Hades is left untranslated in the Greek, where Sheol occurs in the Hebrew, in four places:—2 Sam. 22: 5. Job. 24: 19. Prov. 23: 14. Ezek. 32: 21.

Hades occurs ten times in the N.T.:—

Matt. 11: 23; 16: 18. Lu. 10: 15; 16: 23. Ac. 2: 27, 31. Rev. 1: 18; 6: 8; 20: 13, 14.

Let the reader carefully study these Scriptures with their context (esp. Ezek. 32: 17-32), and he will see that the passage in Luke about Dives and Lazarus stands *completely alone* in the *whole* Bible in its reference to pain and torment in Hades.

Am I to believe that our Lord, who so revered Scripture would speak thus entirely counter to it? God forbid the thought! Our Lord, there, *must* have been speaking in allegory. It is the only possible explanation of things.

The dead *are* dead. That is a simple fact. The lost dead “sleep a perpetual sleep.”<sup>1</sup> The sleep of the O.T. saints is often referred to. God, in His sovereignty, on rare occasions, permitted them to be temporarily aroused, cp. the word of Samuel to the witch of Endor, “Why hast thou *disquieted* me, to bring me up?”<sup>2</sup> i.e. from his rest in Sheol, and there are similar rare hints about the impenitent dead, if such passages are to be taken literally; but “*sleep*” is their normal state there.

The saved of this dispensation “are fallen asleep in *Jesus*.”<sup>3</sup>

The lost dead, at least, live in no sense worthy of the word; on this Scripture is explicit. “The rest of the dead (i.e. the lost) *lived not* until the thousand years should be finished.”<sup>4</sup> This surely is plain enough—indeed it is absolutely conclusive.

All talk about being saved in “the intermediate state,” and especially trying to prove it, by appealing to the case of Dives, and arguing that he then showed a better spirit, in being anxious for the state of his brethren, is entirely beside the mark. What evangelical will maintain that a man is *saved* by gradually becoming better?

Equally beside the mark is the making of a scheme of salvation to rest on the passages in Peter about Christ preaching to the Noachian spirits in prison,<sup>5</sup> and the Gospel being preached to the dead.<sup>6</sup>

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(1) Jer. 51: 39, 57 “perpetual” Heb. *olam*.

(2) 1 Sam. 28: 15.

(3) 1 Thes. 4: 14.

(4) Rev. 20: 5.

(5) 1 Pe. 3: 19.

(6) 4: 6.

The O.T. does speak of salvation from Sheol or Hades (not out of it); but it manifestly means nothing more than deliverance from a penal or premature *earthly* death.<sup>1</sup>

Once in Hades, a place of rest, oblivion, and where "the wicked cease from troubling," there is nothing that calls for, or properly fits either the punishment or salvation of human beings, *until resurrection takes place*. As to the *time when* future reward and punishment *begin*, this question is forever set at rest by one unmistakable saying of our Lord: "The hour cometh, in which *all* that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the *resurrection* of life; and they that have done ill unto the *resurrection* of judgment."<sup>2</sup> The naked unclothed spirit, even of the saved, manifestly does not comport with full salvation. We longingly groan for the glorified body.<sup>3</sup>

If the above reasoning be Scriptural, it follows that the only possible place from which the lost dead can be saved, is not Sheol or Hades, but Gehenna or the lake of fire.

The following passages from Peter are held by many to have an important bearing on the intermediate state:—Chap. 3: 18-20 and 4: 6. I will transcribe the former as translated in both A. V. and R. V.

(1) A. V. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah."

R. V. "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison which aforetime were disobedient in the days of Noah."

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(1) Ps. 30: 2, 3; 49: 15; 86: 13. Prov. 23: 14, etc.

(2) John 5: 28, 29. So, too, S. Paul did not expect to get his "crown" till the Lord's return, i.e. the time when Paul would be raised from the dead. 2 Tim. 4: 8.

(3) 2 Cor. 5: 1-5.

(2) “ For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Let us deal with the last Scripture first.

I would suggest that this verse can only be properly understood if vv. 1 and 2 are first read, and vv. 3, 4, and 5 are treated parenthetically.

I will, therefore, transcribe vv. 1, 2, and 6. “Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. *For unto this end* was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Here I make three observations:—

1. The identical language, which I put in italics, “as Christ *suffered in the flesh*,” and “he that hath *suffered in the flesh*” have a different meaning. The former was suffering to the point of *physical* death, the latter to the *mystical* death to sin. Cp. Rom. 6: 6-11.

2. The identical language “*the dead*” in v. 5, and “*the dead*” in v. 6 have also a different meaning. The former speaks of *physical*, the latter of *mystical* death. Compare our Saviour’s words:—

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, *and now is*, when *the dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”<sup>1</sup>

This speaks, mystically, of the spiritually dead. It does not refer to the raising of Lazarus, Jairus’s daughter, and the widow of Nain’s son, nor does it refer to the raising of the many saints

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(1) Jo. A. 25.

at the Lord's death. These all died physically subsequently. The resurrection proper is treated of by our Lord a few verses below,—“all that are in the tombs,” &c.<sup>1</sup>

3. Remove the parenthetical verses 3, 4 and 5, carefully note the opening words of v. 6, “For unto *this* end,” and then observe these parallelisms of thought:—

v. 1. “he that hath suffered in the flesh ”

v. 6. “judged in the flesh ” Cp. 1 Cor. 11: 31, 32.

v. 2. “live to the will of God ”

v. 6. “live according to God in the spirit.”

These three considerations make me feel that there is no statement here of the gospel being preached to the dead in Hades, that vv. 1, 2, and 6 *exclusively* relate to *this* life; and, therefore, those are mistaken who make this verse parallel to, and explanatory of the supposed preaching in Hades of 1 Pe. 3: 18-20.

Now let us come to this much discussed passage of Christ preaching to the “spirits in prison.”

Taking the A. V., “Christ... being put to death *in* the flesh, but quickened *by* the Spirit; *by* which also he went and preached,” let my reader note:—

1. The words “in” and “by,” in “*in* the flesh” and “*by* the Spirit ” are expressed by the dative in the Greek. For examples of “by the Spirit ” being expressed in the same way, see Gal. 5: 16, 25 (twice). R. V. “Walk by the Spirit.” “Live by the Spirit.” For the thought of the Holy Spirit being the instrument in God's agency of Christ's resurrection, see Ro. 8: 11, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead.... shall also quicken your mortal bodies through (*dia*) His Spirit.”

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(1) vv. 28, 29.

2. In the expression “by which,” *by* is expressed by the Greek preposition “*en*” which may mean either “in,” or “by means of,” i.e. instrumentally, as the A. V. here.

3. Note the word “spirit.”

Is the “spirit” here spoken of as “the Spirit of Christ” equivalent to the Holy Spirit, or the human spirit of Christ, as opposed to His flesh?

If the former, it is better, with the A. V., to translate “*by* which.” If the latter, it is better to translate, with the R. V., “*in* which.” I venture to think that here the A. V. gives the more scriptural thought of two translations which, as such, are equally correct.

The best parallels of “flesh” and “spirit,” in such a connection, are Ro. 1 : 4 and 1 Tim. 3 : 16.

The former reads:—“Who was born of the seed of David, according to the *flesh*, who was declared to be the Son of God . . . according to the *spirit* of holiness.”

This “spirit of holiness” seems to be a synonym for the Holy Spirit, *as the inspirer of the prophets*.

The latter Scripture reads, “He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in (*en*) the spirit.”

This last I take to mean “declared guiltless by the Holy Spirit,” in His assertions in Scripture of Christ’s sinlessness.

The “Spirit” of Jesus Christ the Son is referred to in Acts 16 : 7 ; Ro. 8 : 9 ; Gal. 4 : 6 ; Phil. 1 : 19. Commenting on Rom 8 : 9, “the Spirit of Christ,” which expression (N.B.) occurs also in 1. Pe. 1 : 11, and therefore has a *very important bearing* on the passage now under consideration, Dr. Moule says “Evidently not in the *essentially modern* sense of His (Christ’s) *principles and temper*, but in that of the Personal Holy Spirit, as profoundly connected with Christ.”



If this line of thought be correct, we see that it was not only true that "Christ through (*dia*) the Eternal Spirit offered Himself to God"<sup>1</sup> but that He was "quickened" or made alive from the dead by (*en*) the instrumentality of the same Holy Spirit.

4. Note the word "*preached*."

The word for "preach" here is *kērussō*, "*to herald*." It refers, here, to Noah being inspired by "the Spirit of Christ,"<sup>2</sup> or the Holy Spirit, to preach to the Noachians. Noah is again referred to in 2 Pe. 2: 5, as a '*kērux*'—"a *herald* of righteousness." Both Peter and Paul quote Ps. 16 in their preaching.<sup>3</sup> The former refers to our Lord's descent into Hades (i.e. *Sheol* or "the abode of the dead") and the latter, in another passage,<sup>4</sup> to His descent "into the lower parts of the earth" which is exactly the same thing, for there *Sheol* is located; but neither speak of the slightest activity there on Christ's part, for the very good reason that his human spirit was at rest and asleep there till raised from the dead.

5. Note "the spirits in prison."

This may mean (1) "the spirits (then) in prison" or (2) "the spirits (now) in prison."

If we read as (1) then "prison" or "ward" must mean the prison of the moral law as then known to the Noachians, or the prison of their sins, or even of their bodies. As to the moral law, cp. "But before faith came we were *kept in ward* under the law."<sup>5</sup> As to sins, cp. "the opening of the prison to them that are bound."<sup>6</sup> As to their natural bodies, cp. "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."<sup>7</sup>

If we read as (2) the thought of Hades as being a prison or ward, with its "gates, bars, and keys" is simple and natural.

(1) Heb. 9: 14.

(2) 2 Pe. 1: 11.

(3) Ac. 2: 27; 13: 35.

(4) Ep. 4: 9.

(5) Gal. 3: 23.

(6) Isa. 61: 1.

(7) 2 Cor. 5: 4.

But if so it is a word, scripturally, disconnected with suffering and torment, with the *single exception* of the allegory of Dives and Lazarus, in which the sufferings of Dives are *allegorical* of the exile and sufferings of the Jews, nationally, in *this* life.

6. The word "aforetime" limits the preaching to the Noachians.

I will now touch on another view, and give my reasons for dissent from it.

According to this view, which the R. V. represents, the "spirit" which is referred to in the expression "quickened in the spirit," is not the Holy Spirit as the instrument of Christ's resurrection, but Christ's own human spirit, and the being quickened is taken to mean that, immediately after death, Christ's human spirit took on accretions of vast energy. which energy was used in preaching in Hades to the spirits there. As to who were addressed, and the nature of the preaching there is difference of opinion. Some confine it to Noachians, others, who see in 1 Pe. 4: 6 an extension of idea, would by "analogy and continuity"<sup>1</sup> include all the then dead. Some maintain the "preaching" was an irrevocable sentence of *condemnation*, others make it to be the preaching of the *gospel*, and hold that this is "confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt"<sup>1</sup> by the statement in chapter 4: 6, referred to above; while others combine both these views.

I can only say of these views that they seem to me to be unscriptural, and present vast difficulties for acceptance. I will mention one or two.

If the message of salvation was confined to dead Noachians, no possible solution can be given for such preferential treatment. If it was extended to all the dead up to the time of Christ's death that would mean that the message was proclaimed to at least *a thousand million* souls. Christ had less than three days to

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(1) Plumptre, *Camb: Bible for Schools in loco*.

accomplish the task, and during that time we are plainly told He was "holden of death," and not until His resurrection did God "loose" Him from its "pangs."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, *since* His resurrection His human spirit has never been in Hades, during which time, owing to the increase of the world's population, well nigh a *hundred thousand million* unsaved souls must have gone there. Yet not one of these can have had the privilege of hearing Him preach the gospel. Is our Lord's love less for those who died *after* this, His supposed gospel-ministry in Hades, than for those who died *before* it? Is this held to be credible?

All this difficulty is the result of not accepting scriptural teaching about Sheol or Hades, in which place we are told (apart from *special* Divine interposition) "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom";<sup>2</sup> and again "the dead know not anything."<sup>3</sup>

I have just read the June No. of *Unsearchable Riches*,<sup>4</sup> in which there is an article on Dives and Lazarus by Mr. A. E. Knoch, a deep student of Scripture, with a mind untrammelled by human tradition.

He does not accept our view which sees in Dives *national* Israel.<sup>5</sup> He asks if Israel died nationally in 70 A.D. when did those for whom Lazarus stands die? To this I would reply: Whenever Gentiles and *individual* Jews placed their faith in Christ they *died* to the law as means of salvation, and becoming alive to grace, became Abraham's true children—gladdening the hearts of angels. Mr. Knoch says that we say that "As a result of Israel's death in 70 A.D. there has been a great gulf between Israel and the other nations." To this Mr. Knoch replies:—"As a matter of fact, the contrary is the truth. As a result of Israel's defection, not only has Abraham's blessing come to the nations,

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(1) Acts 2: 24.

(2) Eccles. 9: 10.

(3) 9: 5.

(4) Publication Office 2823 E. 6th St. Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

(5) See *Eschatology in the C. I. M.* p. 84.

but the estrangement between Jew and Gentile has been set aside. The gulf which once existed has vanished. Neither is it true that the nations cannot alleviate the sufferings of Israel."

Here I cannot follow my honoured brother, our premises and conceptions are both different. I have explained the great gulf fixed as being the impassable barrier between the unbelieving *nation* of Israel who reject Christ and seek justification in "works of law," and those who seek to be justified by faith in Christ through faith.

That gulf is still fixed. On this point the Jew *nationally* is as estranged as ever, and so long as this continues, those converted from the nations, as well as *individual* Jewish converts can do nothing whatever to alleviate their sad spiritual state. However I would seek always to have an open mind, and be willing to learn if I am mistaken.

Mr. Knoch's own views are as follows:—

He thinks that our Lord, having just received the scoffings of the Pharisees, and having told them that not one tittle of the law should fail, gives an allegory which would represent to the Sadducees a specimen of what the Pharisees believed, and taught in their "oral law." This Christ utters by "admission," not as representing *His* teaching, but using language "closely allied to irony." Knowing full well that their views of Hades were contradicted by Scripture, Christ puts this solemn word of warning in the mouth of the father of the faithful, in whom they so ostentatiously boasted. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear *them*." "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Mr. Knoch thinks that with the Pharisees and our Lord "matters had come to such a crisis that they would no longer listen to *His* teaching, so He gives them a dose of their *own*." He further says:—"It was natural for the few to seek a sign. They preferred to have one rise from the dead, rather

than listen to Jehovah's words, as recorded by Moses and the prophets. But when another Lazarus did come forth from the tomb, what did they do? They sought to kill him. And what did he report as to the realms of the dead? *Not one word!* Why? *Because there was nothing for him to tell!* Had he some tale like this which would uphold *their* traditions, and give the lie to Moses and the prophets, he would have been the petted idol of the day."

Mr. Knoch sees the Sadducees in the rich man, and the Pharisees in the five brethren. I cannot see in his article whom he thinks to be represented by Lazarus. However this imperfect sketch does not do justice to his views.

I cannot say I accept these views, but I quote them, as showing the infinite difficulty which the allegory of Dives and Lazarus presents to minds *submissive to Scripture* if it is to be taken as Christ's authoritative teaching concerning the *literal* "world of the dead."

Thus taken, it not only makes Christ's teaching to contradict "Moses and the prophets," as to the nature of subsistence in Sheol, or Hades—the very teachers whom, as a didactic allegory, it is designed to uphold—but it also makes Christ contradict His *own* teaching in the New Test. about Hades. Christ is the Author of the *Revelation*, and there He tells us that, at the judgment of the great white throne "Hades gives up the *dead* which were in it;" *not* (N. B.) those *living* in torments unable to get a drop of water to cool their parched tongues!! Further it is asserted that *after* this giving up, the dead "were judged every one according to his works;" but in the allegory of Dives and Lazarus judgment had then *already been pronounced*, and the reason for the inflicted punishment explained—"Thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.....but now thou art in anguish." I must, then, again record my indignant protest against this allegory being made to sustain the doctrine of *endless torment following immediately upon physical death*, which is what Mr. Frost and his colleagues stand for. Such teachers

shut their eyes to the very teaching which the allegory enforces—"they hear not Moses and the prophets." For any one who will read them, *with the least attention*, will see that Sheol or Hades if, generally, a place of gloom and silence, is *most certainly not* a place of torment, but of REST.

The words of our Lord to the thief on the cross are held to have an important bearing on "the intermediate state." As to the Greek and grammar of the sentence, there can be two correct translations, differing only in punctuation. Either "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" or "Verily I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The Greek conjunction *hoti* ("that") is often used in the N. T. for introducing the words of a speech, in which case it needs no translation into English. If it occurred either after "thee," or "to-day," it would be conclusive; but it does not.

*Hoti* occurs in these two passages in Luke:—"And He began to say unto them (*hoti*) To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled."<sup>1</sup> and "Jesus said unto him (*hoti*) To-day is salvation come to this house."<sup>2</sup>

It is argued that "to-day" in such a sentence as "I say unto thee to-day" is unnecessary, being, of itself, evident. But there may have been great point in the words. "Verily I say unto thee to-day, this day of my humiliation and apparent defeat, I—the King, as you have by faith discerned—promise you the future bliss of Paradise." The wording of the sentence, however, being thus ambiguous; will the next clause help us as to its meaning? Surely it will! "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise." In the Greek O. T. the word "Paradise" occurs 26 times, of which 13 are in Gen. 2 and 3 speaking of "the garden of Eden." Elsewhere, it is a "garden" or a "park," and does not help matters.

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(1) 4: 21.

(2) 19: 9.

In the N. T. it occurs in three places—Lu. 23: 43; 2 Cor. 12: 4; Rev. 2: 7.

In 2 Cor. 12: 4, where we read of Paul being “caught up into Paradise,” it is either, as a place, entirely synonymous with “the third heaven,” (v. 3.) or some region in the third heaven. Our Lord after His resurrection says plainly “I am *not yet ascended* to the Father,”<sup>1</sup> which plainly shows that, on the days between His crucifixion and resurrection, He did not “*ascend*.” On the contrary, we know His human spirit, as other spirits, *descended* into Hades; and the only way in which an attempt can be made to meet an impossible difficulty by those who claim that Christ, during those days when His body was in the tomb, both *ascended* into the third heaven with the thief, and also *descended* into Hades for preaching to lost spirits is by the weak remark that “it is difficult to predicate locality of a disembodied spirit!” The truth is the difficulty here is only caused by “the intermediate state”—of which theology should be cleared—except that state is recognized as being one of “sleep.”

As to Rev. 2: 7. The fruit “of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” is promised by Christ as a *future* blessing to overcomers, and the passage which dilates on this tree<sup>2</sup> plainly shows that it refers to the *resurrection* state. I take it, then, that Christ’s words to the thief spoke of future, not immediate bliss. This was the true answer to the thief’s request “Remember me, when Thou comest in (or into) Thy kingdom!” How comparatively simple things become when one sees that the truth about “the intermediate state” is *normally* summed up in the word SLEEP, whether “sleeping with their fathers,” or “sleeping in Jesus.” Let no Christian take offence at this. Sleep for a thousand years would be as the twinkling of an eye! Hence as far as *consciousness* is concerned the Christian is deprived of nothing. This moment he “falls asleep,” the next moment *as to consciousness*, he is possessed of a *glorified body*. He is “absent from the

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(1) Jo. 20: 17.

(2) Rev. 22: 2, 3.

body, present with the Lord;” he “departs<sup>1</sup> and is with Christ which is very far better,” *not* as a naked, unclothed spirit—which sleep is becoming to—but clothed upon with full immortality. Paul plainly spoke of his “departure,”<sup>2</sup> but knew he could not receive the “crown” till the Lord’s “appearing” and the resurrection day.<sup>3</sup> *The blessed Paul is now “asleep.”* Hence if we want hope for the countless lost, it is of no use to seek for it in “the intermediate state;” but in that “age of ages” and its consummation which follow *after* resurrection and judgment; for God will bring judgment to victory, and finally cause mercy to triumph in the case of “every created thing.”

As to the order of events in the last chapters of Revelation, we read of rebellion following the thousand years reign, this being quelled, the devil, beast, and false prophet are judged, the great white throne of judgment is set up, “and if *any* was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire,” which fire is a metaphor for God’s just judgment.

It would probably be an under-statement to suppose that this will be the lot of *a hundred thousand million human beings*. Now let the reader fix his mind on that long period of some thousands of years, which is called “the age of ages,” of which, from this standpoint, one thousand years are already past. That is to say, let him dwell on the great age which lasts from the judgment of the great white throne, till the Son gives up his perfected mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and the Father becomes “all in all.”

This long period is usually *completely hid* from the eyes of endless tormentists, but, relative to eschatology, *it is of infinite importance*.

In English evangelical circles, this period was somewhat brought to light by Mr. G. F. Trench in his book “*After the*

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(1) Gk: *anabasis* Phil. 1: 23.

(2) Gk: *anabasis*.

(3) 2 Tim. 4: 6, 7.



*thousand years;*"<sup>1</sup> but the precious truths it logically leads to, were not perceived by Mr. Trench, and, therefore, not taught. I now ask the important question, What do we know about this long period from Scripture, during which the lake of fire, or God's judgment, is in existence ?

- (1) The saints will reign with Christ throughout that period.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) The saints will *do* God *service* during the same period.<sup>3</sup>
- (3) Christ is throughout this period extolled as Lamb of God, Priest, Saviour, and King.
- (4) These offices being in existence, they will, of course, be in exercise.

The punishment in hell, which will continue during that period, will vary *greatly* in *duration*. This is made absolutely certain by our Lord's words "many stripes" and "few stripes." Who but a very special and prejudiced pleader would dream of excluding *duration* from the explanation of giving five hundred blows and fifty? If this is so, salvation out of the lake of fire will be continually going on.

I now propose and answer two questions.

- (1) Who will the saints reign over?

*Answer.* They will, at least, reign over *the lost*. Christ reigning over His *enemies* proves this; for the saints reign *with* Christ.

- (2) How will the saved do God service ?

I answer "In the gospel of His Son."<sup>4</sup> Could saints *perfected in love* reign over the lost and not seek their good?

Some may ask, What ground have you got for such statements? I reply, The statements and prophecies of Scripture

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(1) London. Morgan and Scott.

(2) Rev. 11: 15; 22: 5.

(3) Rev. 22: 3.

(4) Rom. 1: 9. Same Greek word for "serving" as in Rev. 22: 3.

*necessarily* involve this. What statements and prophecies? I reply, Sooner or later it will be true of every lost human being in the universe that he or she will:—

- (1) Bow the knee *in* the Name of Saviour, and confess Him Lord to the Father's Glory.<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Find in Christ their Head.<sup>2</sup>
- (3) Be reconciled through the blood of the cross.<sup>3</sup>
- (4) Be made alive in Christ.<sup>4</sup>
- (5) Have come upon them the free gift to justification of life.<sup>5</sup>

The second death, which is the lake of fire, will be abolished as the *last* enemy;<sup>6</sup> and these following prophecies will be *finally* fulfilled:—

“Behold I make *all* things new.”<sup>7</sup>

“There shall be no more *anything* accursed.”<sup>8</sup>

God the Father shall become “*all in all*.”<sup>9</sup>

Now if Gospel salvation is not going on throughout the age of ages into the consummation, *how will these magnificent results be obtained? Will so great an effect have no cause?*

Extreme endless tormentists are, I think, responsible for having by their teaching generated the lamentable suspicion and unreasonable fear which attaches to the subject of eschatology. I never shall forget, years ago, speaking to an official of the C.I.M. on the point. In verification of what I was saying I took up a book (which the official knew was on the side of future hope) to show him a passage; he started back and refused to look at the book, avoiding it like poison! Many would

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(1) Phil. 2: 10, 11.

(3) Col. 1: 20.

(5) Rom. 5: 18.

(7) Rev. 21: 5.

(9) 1 Cor. 15: 28.

(2) Eph. 1: 10.

(4) 1 Cor. 15: 22.

(6) 1 Cor. 15: 26.

(8) 22: 3.

applaud such an act; but surely a man must have a very poor cause, if he won't look into "the other side." I have not the slightest fear in giving careful attention to what an endless tormentist says, or writes. The more such say and write, the more I see the utter weakness and fallacy of their position.

Take for example Sir Robert Anderson in his *Human Destiny*. On pp. 181-205 he seeks to extract all future hope from the glorious scriptures I have quoted above. What a miserable occupation!

I have not time here to confute him at length. I will just take *one* page, and make a few comments—p. 186.

Speaking on "that God may be all in all" which words, he says, are held to imply universal restoration, he proceeds as follows:—

"But this result is declared to be 'when He shall have *put down* all rule, and all authority, and power.' It is not attained 'till He hath put all enemies *under His feet*' till 'all things shall be *subdued* unto Him;' and this is not the sort of language in which Scripture speaks of winning back the lost to God. Moreover the absolute and acknowledged supremacy of the Almighty is all that is involved in the words 'that God may be all in all.' The gloss 'all things *in all men*' betrays either dishonesty or levity in handling Scripture." [Sir R's italics.]

I here make some laconic remarks. "*Put down*" gives a wrong sense. It should be "abolished" (R.V.) or "put away,"<sup>1</sup> a very important distinction; for the reference is to angelic *office*, and here even *good* angels are included, which Sir Robert, as the A.V. translators, were not aware of, if we may judge by their translation. He leaves out altogether the abolition of "death" *between* the putting of enemies *under His feet*, and then, *after death is abolished*, those who had *previously* been enemies being subjected "unto Him." The "death" here is

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(1) 1 Cor. 13: 11, Greek.

not the abolition of death by the resurrection of the bodies of the saints which will take place *before* the judgment, but the abolition of the second death at the consummation of the age of the ages.<sup>1</sup>

The statement "He (the Son) must reign till He (the Father) hath put all His enemies under His (the Son's) feet" raises the immensely important question as to whether God's final purpose is to *exterminate* evil, or only to *suppress* it.

In the mediatorial reign of Christ for the age of ages the saints reign with Him, and the above Scripture seems to plainly state that the joint reign will be over enemies, who will all be gradually brought into subjection under His feet; the giving up of the kingdom to the Father synchronizing with "the *last* enemy" being *abolished*. Now let us examine Scripture on the subjects of "under the feet," "footstool," and "enemies."

1. Ps. 8: 4-8. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than God. . . . Thou hast put all things *under his feet*, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea"

2. Eph. 1: 20-23. "Made Him (Christ) to sit at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named. . . . and He put all things *under His feet*."

3. Heb. 2: 6-8, (after quoting Ps. 8 above) "Thou didst put all things in subjection *under His feet*, and made Him to be Head over all things to the Church."

4. 1 Cor. 15: 27. "For He put all things in subjection *under His feet*. But when He saith, all things are in subjection, it is manifest that He is excepted, who did subject all things unto Him."

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(1) See *Plea and Protest*, pp. 51, 52.

The mere expression, then, "*under His feet*" does not necessarily mean forced subjection, for in this last quotation *all* are placed there—God the Father being the *only* exception.

#### FOOTSTOOL

1. Ps. 110: 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy *footstool*." Mk. 12: 36; Ac. 2: 35.

2. Heb. 10: 12, 13. "But He, when He had offered one Sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting, till His enemies be made the *footstool* of His feet."

3. Isa. 66: 1. "Thus saith Jehovah, the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My *footstool*." Mt. 5: 25; Ac. 7: 49.

We know the earth is cursed; however the final outcome of its being God's footstool is a new and perfected earth.

#### ENEMIES

God will ever be the highest Exemplar of His own doctrine, and it is He who bids us to "overcome evil with good."

Let us note the following Scriptures about enemies, and then ask ourselves if they easily fit in with the theory of their Author being the God of an *endless* hell?

1. Lu. 6: 27, 35. "But I say unto you which hear, Love your *enemies*, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you." "But love your *enemies* and do them good. . . . and ye shall be the sons of the most High, for He is *kind* toward the unthankful and *evil*."

2. Ro. 5: 10. "For if while we were *enemies*, we were *reconciled* to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life."

3. Ro. 11: 28. "As touching the Gospel they (the Jews) are *enemies* for your sake, but as touching the election they are *beloved* for the fathers' sake."

4. Ro. 12 : 21. "If thine *enemy* hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of *fire* on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but *overcome evil with good*."

5. Col. 1 : 21. "And you, being in time past alienated, and *enemies* in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He *reconciled* in the body of His flesh *through death*, to present you holy, and without blemish, and unreprouable before Him."

The putting of *enemies* under His feet means the Lord getting His enemies completely in His power; and then what else will ALMIGHTY LOVE do to helpless surrendered rebels, who acknowledge their guilt and the Divine justice, but give them repentance and faith; and, in so doing, make them friends?

The following Scripture refers to God's people in contrast with "the nations;" yet it may give a key to God's dealings.

"He will turn again and have compassion on us, *He will tread our iniquities under foot*, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea." Me. 7 : 18, 19.

Christ "abolished" and "slew" "*enmity*" on the cross;<sup>1</sup> and there, too, He put away *sin*.<sup>2</sup> How can the theories of endless tormentists square with this last Scripture, when they assert *endless sin*? Sin was *ideally* put away at the crucifixion, it will be *actually* and *finally* put away at the consummation of the ages to come.

In an awful passage about rebels, our Saviour says: "These Mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me."<sup>3</sup>

What are we to make of this slaying? It looks, on the surface, as if it meant *summary, instant extinction*, if we do not remember that it is God's prerogative to "kill and make alive;"<sup>4</sup>

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(1) Eph. 2 : 15, 16.

(2) Heb. 9 : 26.

(3) Lu. 19 : 27,

(4) Dent. 32 : 39.

but no school of thought makes it to mean just that. Endless tormentists would explain it as meaning *being preserved alive in a state of endless enmity against the King*.

Extinctionists would explain it as meaning extinction of being, *after* enduring just punishment.

Reconciliationists would explain it as meaning, passing through the second death, they will, finally, emerge into life, slain *as enemies*, they will, finally, be made alive *as friends*.

Hence after the abolition of the second death, as the *last* enemy, and the re-quotation, in a parenthetical way, of “He put all things in subjection under His feet,” we read of no more “enemies;” and the words “*under His feet*” give place to most significant expression “*unto Him*,” which is first used, here, of the relationship of every intelligent being to the Son, and then used of the relationship of the Son to the Father.

Sir Robert says Scripture does not connect subjection with salvation. What does he make of this: “Shall we not much rather be in *subjection* unto the Father of spirits *and live*?”<sup>1</sup>

He does not see that subjection “unto Him” is *voluntary*, just as the subjection of the Son “unto Him”—the Father—, which is spoken of in the very same verse, is also *voluntary*.

The audacity of making God “all in all” to mean only “absolute and acknowledged supremacy”—the statement that this exhausts its meaning, “*all that is meant*”—is most painful, and *hopelessly* biased.

The Son is subjected by the Father, and the Father, as He always has been, is “all in” Him.<sup>2</sup> Is the relationship of the Father to the Son nothing nearer and dearer than “absolute and acknowledged supremacy?”

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(1) Heb. 12: 9.

(2) The Father has always been “all” in the uncreated Son, and in His unfallen creation. He will yet *become* “all” in His fallen creation.

Does not the Holy Spirit care to say “in,” when He means “in;” and “over,” when He means “over?” Again Sir Robert asserts:—

“The gloss ‘all things *in all men*’ betrays either dishonesty or levity in handling Scripture.”

I turn up Bengel’s *Gnomon* and I read:—“*All things* (and therefore all men) without any interruption, without any creature to invade his prerogative, or any enemy to disturb will be made subordinate to the Son, and the Son to the Father. *All things* will say, *God is all to me.*” [Bengel’s italics.]

In my *Eschatology in the C.I.M.*, p. 97, I have said that Anderson criticizing Jukes on eschatology reminded me of Landseer’s picture of Dignity and Impudence: but what shall we say of his charging the great, learned, and holy Bengel with “dishonesty” (!) or levity (!!) in handling Scripture?

It seems almost as absurd as asserting that Sir Robert possesses a tolerant and judicial mind, I will not say concerning all things, but—that I be not too hard on him—concerning the subject of *Human Destiny*.

Bengel might have gone further than his remark “and therefore all men”; he might have said “and therefore *all angels*, and all men;” for verse 24 speaks of all angels, both good and bad, as his *Gnomon*, in its notes on that verse, shows most clearly.

On the same page Sir Robert comments on Phil. 2: 10 as follows:—

“The Divine purpose ‘that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth.’ Not merely angels and saints and men on earth shall own him Lord, but also the dwellers in the under world.<sup>1</sup> But till it has been proved that this acknowledgment

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(1) That is, the world of the lost.



shall be obtained from all by reconciliation, it must not be assumed that it will not be, in the case of some, by judgment."

And, thoroughly satisfied with his own performance, Sir Robert thinks that he can *thus* be little this most surpassing scripture!

To begin with, he mistranslates; which is nothing short of criminal in an educated gentleman dealing with a scripture of such infinite importance. It is not "*at* the Name of Jesus;" but "*in* the Name of Jesus." Now when Sir Robert can tell me how any being can "bow the knee"—that is "worship"—"*in* the Name of Jesus," or Saviour, and remain unreconciled, and unsaved, *then* I will begin to pay heed to his miserable exegesis.

I should not speak like this, were it not that Sir Robert is one of those pugnacious endless tormentists who call in question the *honesty* of those who differ from him; he does this more than once.

Sir Robert asserts an endless hell; but he can not altogether ignore the Scriptures on the other side; in attempting to confute them, he says:—"All that is essential here is to show that the passages in question bear an explanation wholly different from that which these writers put upon them; and *this at least has been accomplished.*"<sup>1</sup> [My italics]

Wonderful accomplishment—and all to prop up the doctrine of an endless hell! But really accomplished? So Sir Robert asserts. Let his treatment of 1 Cor. 15: 28 and Phil. 2: 10, above, be specimens of his success. Perish the teaching which would seek to destroy HOPE, for our poor, miserable, and guilty race! Sooner than do this, I would have a millstone cast about my neck, and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Sir Robert makes endless punishment wholly turn on the rejection of Christ. He asks questions which appear to him to

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(1) *Human Destiny*, p. 46.

be unanswerable, but which any child should be able to answer. He says :—“ God has revealed Himself as the Saviour of *all men*; Christ has been manifested as ‘ a ransom for *all*,’ ‘ the propitiation for the sins of *the whole world*.’<sup>1</sup> But will these teachers tell us . . . how sinners can be saved who reject the Saviour, how the lost can be restored who trample under foot the propitiation? It is these very truths which make the sinner’s doom irreversible and hopeless.”

I would first say the glorious Scriptures mentioned above will be finally *infallibly* fulfilled. Thus dealt with, the questions which follow should never be raised. If raised, the very simple answer is this. *As long as*<sup>2</sup> sinners reject the Saviour, *of course* they can not be saved; but Scripture assures us none will do this *endlessly*. Is *one* rejection of Christ an irreversible sin? We know it is not, some reject Him nearly all their lives and are yet saved. The rejection of Christ is, therefore, plainly not an *irreversible* sin, hence it will not have an *irreversible* doom. Every knee will sooner or later bow *in* His Name, and this necessarily involves reconciliation. God will bring it about—that is sufficient.

Endless tormentists take it for granted that *endless conscious misery* is plainly revealed in Scripture. Therefore, in Eschatology, this is, to them, *the great test* of being “ sound in the faith.”

For my own part, I prefer to ask and answer this simple question. As to the doctrine of ends in Scripture, is there a revealed *final* or *ultimate* end? I answer Yes! What is it? “ That God may be all in all.” Then I say, as to eschatology, we should make “ soundness in the faith ” to turn on the acceptance or rejection of *this* statement. Here are two courses :—

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(1) “ Propitiation ” means “ a means of appeasing.”

(2) See Heb. 6: 6. The present participle in the Greek is brought out in the Margin (R.V.) “ *the while they*.” See Rom. 11: 23, 32.

(1) Accept the *revealed* final end of Scripture. Take it to mean *just what it says*, and then show that Scriptures which *appear* to be contrary to this, can have a fair Scriptural explanation, which make them consistent with that *revealed* end.

(2) Assert an endless hell, which the *revealed* end of Scripture makes to be *utterly impossible*, and is, by Scripture, shown to be a doctrine "*wholly and forever discredited*," and then try to show that all the Scriptures which seem to speak of final universal reconciliation may have a different meaning to this, and may therefore be consistent with an endless hell.

It is only the believers in final reconciliation who *really* and *exactly* believe that God will be, or become "*all in all*." Extinctionists and endless tormentists believe that He will be only all in *some*, for with the former, multitudes <sup>2</sup>will be *blotted out of existence*, and with the latter, multitudes will be in *endless antagonism* to God, and of these two multitudes it may be truly said:—God will be "*nothing in any*" of them.

Now reader, make your choice, and God help you to make the Scriptural and, *therefore*, right one! Stand as firm for the *revealed* final end, as Luther did for "*The just shall live by faith!*" No surrender! Love and pity your opponents if they cast you out! *Pray for them!*

I now address a few words to my brethren in Christ who are members of Councils in the C.I.M. other than the American:

My brethren, with reference to eschatology what are you going to do for the cause of Christ, and China?

Mr. Frost in his articles on "*The Spiritual Condition of the heathen*" plainly means to justify the position he took up in the *American China's Millions* of March, 1914.

I have so fully dwelt on that subject in my *Eschatology in the C. I. M.* that here I need only a brief recapitulation of facts.

1. You know quite well that Mr. Frost's definition of the state of those who die lost, including the heathen, as being one of "*unending conscious*" suffering, has NEVER been given out publicly in print, as the OFFICIAL creed of the C. I. M. before he did this in March, 1914.

2. Mr. Frost had sought to get your consent before on this point, but was unsuccessful.

3. He must then, surely, have acted on his own responsibility without Mr. Hoste's consent, and certainly without your *united* consent.

4. By his extreme statement that "to have fellowship with Christians in corporate service on any other basis is both unwarrantable and dangerous," he has virtually caused separation between himself and some of you.

5. He ought therefore, logically, to insist on the expulsion of those among you who differ from him, or himself retire from the Mission,—he and all his Council, whom he has pledged to a like belief,—unless he and his Council are willing to *profess* one thing, and *do* another, or unless—may God grant it—they are willing to take more moderate ground.

6. Mr. Frost is now, and has for years been co-operating with those who differ from him, *this one fact makes his present extreme position completely untenable* ; for, in so doing, Mr. Frost is himself daily acting in a way which he exhorts others to avoid.

7. Does not all the above point to the acceptance of that toleration, as to eschatology, which Mr. Hudson Taylor believed would, in time to come, be the best thing for the Mission ?

If the C. I. M. were a Mission which held endless torment, as Mr. Frost does, AS A WHOLE WITHOUT EXCEPTION, then toleration would be utterly unworkable and impossible. In that case I should leave the Mission severely alone, after giving a VEHEMENT PROTEST. But the simple fact of the

matter is that the Mission's views AS A WHOLE are NON-DESCRIPT, however Mr. Frost may like to break out in print, and force matters. *Even all the American section does not see with him*, though he thinks and says it does.

Believing eternal punishment and final universal reconciliation to be the WHOLE TRUTH of Scripture on this point, I have as little enthusiasm for eternal punishment and final extinction, as I have for endless torment; each are to me as the other. But in the C. I. M. endless torment *must* be permitted until *all* are brought to see that it is a *miserable delusion*. Hence, if I tolerate that, I have no right not to tolerate the other, and this means all round toleration, with the *safeguard* that *all Scriptural language must be accepted*. Toleration is a confession of weakness; it has not the strength of Dogmatism, but in such a Mission, confessedly founded on a mistake, it is far better than DISHONESTY and HYPOCRISY—to profess that the Mission is what it is not. Toleration admitted, all would be STRAIGHTFORWARD, and the work of soul-saving furthered; for with this *last*, particular views of eschatology are not immediately concerned. *God is pleased to use members of all the three schools of thought in soul-saving*, who will deny this?

In this Theological battle it is only Truth that can win in the end; and those are not necessarily most possessed of truth, who ever have its name on their lips. The words “true” and “truth” occur six times in one paragraph in Mr. Frost’s pronunciamento;<sup>1</sup> but *the wise* will judge his utterances not by his protestations of truth, nor by his assertion of the possession of “a true theology,” but by Scripture. I freely admit Mr. Frost’s love for truth, but we must all have charity enough to believe that *each* party longs, yearns for, and loves Truth above all things. The great thing we all need is more PATIENT

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(1) Eschatology in the C. I. M. p. 2.

LOVE, more SYMPATHY. That party which most searches the *original* Scriptures, most reverences them, and most “rightly handles” them, will, in the end, commend itself to most of those men’s consciences in the sight of God *who, by grace, know God’s character best.*

### POSTSCRIPT.

August 31, 1915. Last night late, I received the following letter from Mr. Frost. It states his position with frankness and clearness, and I consider it to be only fair to him to print the entire letter *verbatim*. The entire MS. of the booklet had been sent to the printer a few days before Mr. Frost's letter arrived, hence this "postscript."

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China Inland Mission  
Germantown  
Philadelphia, Pa.

July 21st, 1915.

Dear Mr. Smith:—

Your letter of the 16th ultimo has reached me to-day. According to your request for an immediate answer, I reply to you at once.

Accept of my thanks for writing to me direct concerning the editorial note in the North American edition of "*China's Millions*," of date March, 1914. I appreciate being dealt with in the matter in a brotherly and friendly way. Be assured that I seek to write to you in the same spirit in which you have written to me. Allow me to add, whatever differences of opinion may exist between us, that I never forget our past association and fellowship and never cease to give you my true esteem and affection in Christ.

It was I who wrote the editorial note of which you speak and who was responsible for inserting in the "*Millions*" the "Doctrinal Basis" with its accompanying foot-notes. I beg to call your attention to the fact, however, that I limited its application by the use of the words, "as it is used in North America." I did this, because I was aware of the fact that I had no authority to speak for any other class of persons than those identified with this portion of the work. For this same reason, I would reit-

erate my statement, saying that I spoke for the Mission in North America. As for the other parts of the work, I must refer you to Mr. Holden at London, Mr. Southey at Dunedin, and especially to Mr. Hoste at Shanghai.

It is necessary to point out to you that the notes attached to the "Doctrinal Basis" are not an integral part of the "Basis." Mr. Taylor formulated the seven articles of the "Basis," but I attached for our use here—in the year 1901—the aforesaid notes. It is open to question, in view of these facts, as to whether I acted wisely in connecting the notes with the "Basis" in public print. However, I did so, first, because they expressed the sense in which Mr. Taylor used the words referred to, and secondly, because they signified the interpretation which we had given to them from the time that the work in North America had been inaugurated. Permit me to add that the notes represent our present conception of the meaning of that portion of the "Doctrinal Basis" to which they refer, and that this meaning is the one upon which the work of the Mission in North America is being built up.

Assuring you of my warm affection in Christ,

Believe me,

Your sincere friend,

HENRY W. FROST.

The brotherly and friendly tone of this letter is manifest. At the same time, to my mind, it only adds to the mystery of Mr. Frost's mental position. How, on the one hand, he can use such words as "I never cease to give you my true esteem, and affection in Christ," and yet, by his Editorial Notes in *China's Millions* to, practically, lay down the law that "to have fellowship in corporate service" with such a man as I am is "unwarrantable and dangerous" is a state of mind which passes my comprehension; it is almost as puzzling as another member of



the C.I.M. who sent me a booklet in which he stated that men who thought as I do were “blasphemers of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” and wrote on the booklet that it was sent to me with his “affectionate Christian regard”!

Surely such contradictory statements should open the eyes of *some* to see the *absurdity* of the position of pugnacious intolerant extremists in Eschatology. It gives me pain to record the incident.

As far as I can see, I drew a correct conclusion when I hazarded the opinion that Mr. Frost, in writing as he had done, was acting *independently*. If this is so, I think the urgent necessity of “toleration in the C. I. M. as far as Eschatology is concerned,” to quote Mr. Hudson Taylor’s words, must be apparent to thoughtful and logical minds.

From what I know of Mr. Stuart Holden, I feel I should be doing him no wrong in saying that he does not see eye to eye with Mr. Frost. I know for certain that this is so with members of Councils, and missionaries of the C. I. M. Will Mr. Frost maintain that, *being a Director of the C. I. M.*, he has *not* “fellowship with Christians in corporate service” who—as these are—are either officials, or members of his *own* Mission? Does he hold the North American section of the Mission to be an integral part of the mission, or has it separated?

Manifestly it has not separated. Then what should follow? I maintain *this* should follow:—Mr. Frost and others in the C. I. M. should be permitted to assert that “eternal punishment” means “endless conscious suffering,” and that this will be endured by all those who die lost, including the heathen. But if Mr. Frost and others are allowed *such liberty*, then they should be satisfied with this and not be allowed to advocate religious ostracism on this point; and this for two reasons:—(1) It is wrong to do so (2) They do not carry out what they advocate.

This would mean the co-operation of those who differ in opinion (as to Eschatology in the C. I. M.) for soul-saving work,

which would tend to *greater soul saving*, and that detestable *mutual suspicion*, which is fostered by wrong deductions from the views of extremists, would be forever removed. We should then each heartily subscribe to the fact that those who differed from us were HONEST MEN, at worst only mistaken in judgment; and, if mistaken, not mistaken on a point of such *vital* and *overwhelming* importance as to render it necessary for the LORD to withhold His blessing, or to make co-operation impossible in a body of such Protestant, Catholic ideals as the China Inland Mission.

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